BOOK REVIEW

REVISITING AND EXTENDING THE NOTION OF GENRE

Paola Evangelisti Allori, John Bateman and Vijay K. Bhatia (Eds.). EVOLUTION IN GENRE. EMERGENCE, VARIATION, MULTIMODALITY (2014), Bern: Peter Lang. 364 pp., ISBN 978-3-0343-1533-3 (PB).

Those following the theory of genre analysis in the field of English for Specific Purposes always refer back to two seminal works: Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993). Since then, a lot has been written about the notion of genre and how it has evolved through the time. The volume *Evolution in genre. Emergence, variation, multimodality* edited by Evangelisti Allori, Bateman and Bhatia is one of the latest contributions which show the current views on the notion of genre compared to the initial ones. This compilation of research articles points at showing how the notion of genre is getting adapted to new communicative situations, maintaining effectiveness, by means of updated, mixed, embedded and hybrid genres.

The volume is divided into three main sections, matching the subtitle of the book: emerging genres, genre variability, and multimodality in genres. Three chapters in the first section, six in the second and five in the third one is the quasi-balanced distribution presented by the editors. Despite this division, it is difficult to establish this distribution as a strict one because, apart from the common feature of genre, some other similarities are also found in most articles in a transverse manner, such as methodological issues, material examined or the media used for communication. Additionally, several genres and research fields also appear transversally in the book, from business to academic genres, including political, legal, or medical ones, among others.

The first section on emergent genres and interaction between genres includes three contributions (not four, as mentioned in the introduction, p. 11). The first article, "The evolution of business discourse and the emergence of the corporate social responsibility paradigm: An investigation of CSR reports", deals with the CSR report on a preliminary diachronic study. Including a brief literature review of this genre, Catenaccio uses corpus linguistics and discourse analysis as methodological tools to show the trends on keyness and priming effects, studying lexical bundles, metaphors or frequent key words. In the following article, "Variation in apologetic strategies in annual company reports: Rhetorical functions of lexical-syntactical patterns", Giglioni also refers to another report within the genre colony, as mentioned by Bhatia (2004). She focuses on how a positive tone is held even in negative times. This diachronic study, although not new, is very useful for the systemic analysis and approach followed, and can open new lines of research. The final contribution to this first section is from Maci with an article entitled "Investigating variation in medical poster abstracts". As the previous papers, this is another diachronic study of medical poster abstracts presented at conferences from a Critical Discourse Analysis viewpoint. Similarly to the previous research presented in this section, possible lexical and generic changes are studied.

The following section, on genre Variability, starts with Bhatia's article "Managing interdiscursive space in professional communication" (even though in the introduction it is included in the first section). Needless to say, Bhatia is an outstanding reference for genre and professional communication. In his article, he revisits one of his most relevant contributions to the field, interdiscursivity, and its current application to three different professional contexts, such as corporate disclosure practices, colonisation of arbitration practices, and newspaper classifieds. In the next chapter, the aim of research was the legal discourse. In the paper entitled "Trial proceeding transcripts as genre: Decontextualization and recontextualization", Giordano studies the effect of the court reporters' parenthetical comments included in the trial transcripts on the readers' understanding of non-verbal information to better understand the context. In other words, the need to analyse the extra information involving non-speech elements and its usefulness in the better understanding of the situation. A different genre and field is the focus of attention in the following article, in which Mansfield uses the TV sitcom as the genre to be studied. In "Anything for a laugh: Creating and maintaining humour from script to subtitling in the British TV situation comedy", she refers to the multimodal nature of subtitling for the hearing impaired viewers. A multimodal analysis is carried out to check how humour gets transformed or modified from the written transcript to the actual performance and then to the subtitles. In particular, she looks at certain linguistic and paralinguistic features (mainly phonological elements), such as accents or homophones, among others, which are proved to lead to humorous situations. In a more pedagogically-oriented research, Sancho Guinda explores "the engagement strategies [engineering] students deploy in their effort to align with teachers (the genre gate-keepers) when the graph commentary becomes a

class task" (p. 168). She concludes giving a teaching recommendation: probably the best option to avoid non-acceptable genre variants would be to teach students how to combine rhetorical and lexico-grammatical strategies to comment graphs, and to inform them of the most frequest repertoires and conventions that community genre users tend to employ. Poppi, in her paper entitled "From business letters to e-mails: Balancing tradition and change", deals with the dramatic changes technology has brought to the business world and to the written communication. She studies the evolution of letters to e-mails by analysing a corpus of traditional business letters and recent business e-mails. She focuses on the most common and frequent lexico-grammatical choices and rhetorical structures in order to prove whether the socially shared generic norms have changed over time due to the new medium used. She also tries to establish whether the medium may have affected the message as well as the generic variability. Finally, another legal genre, very much related to business, is the main concern in Gotti and D'Angelo's paper "Genre variation in mediation practice: Traditional vs online processes". They deal with an online version to solve disputes (the ODR, or online dispute resolution) confronted to the most traditional process of face-to-face mediation. Through genre analysis (although at the end the authors admit the need to use a multimodal analysis), the authors show the generic structure of the ODR mediation and how technology (the medium) has supported both the variability in the realization of this genre moves and some changes in language and even in the negotiation techniques, but not the notion of genre.

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The final and third section focuses on multimodality. The first article is written by another outstanding author on the topic, Bateman. In his article "Genre in the age of multimodality: Some conceptual refinements for practical analysis", he deeply revises certain notions which are key to the study of genre from a multimodal perspective. In fact, he refers to genre, rhetorical strategies, medium and (semiotic) mode, illustrated by means of some multimodal examples. Additionally, he proposes a methodology to study genres in a multimodal context. In "Transgeneric multimodal designs across business and academic communication: The case of multimedia kits", Maier presents an exploratory study based on the multimedia kits delivered in symposia on digital production of film and TV. Those kits are packages made up of a printed booklet and a DVD; other media and semiotic modes are embedded within those two media elements, such as film, TV, the Internet, or radio, but also a wide variety of academic and professional genres, such as lectures and/or presentations, research studies, or interviews, among others. The main concern of the paper is to show "methodological tools suitable for exploring the consequences of combining these types of knowledge [the actual events and participants, and the specialized knowledge] in a complex multimodal package including a diverse range of genres borrowed from various contexts" (p. 272). In her article "Collaborative writing and linking: When technology interacts with genres in meaning situation" Petroni refers to the complexity of analysing

webpages. She explains how the analysis of webpages and web genres cannot follow the standards of genre analysis (i.e. communicative purpose, move purpose) but must take into account hypermodality, interactivity and hyperlinking processes. She completes her view on the new web genres by illustrating a common activity in the new technological scenario, as it is the collaborative writing processes, and specifically, a Wikipedia page. Additional research on websites is shown in the following contribution, "Emerging conventions in the verbal component of the 'About' pages of British university websites". Her author, Caiazzo, studies the verbal component of the 'About' pages of British university websites. She mainly aims at checking whether emerging conventions at linguistic and textual levels can be identified. Finally, Degano, in her article "Genre variation in electoral campaigns: Adaptation to the audience in UK posters and TV debates", deals with the effect UK TV prime ministerial debates may have on the discursive practices of election campaigns. She compares this new form of electoral communication in the UK with the more traditional media, posters, as part of the electoral campaign repertoire.

This volume is a must for anyone interested in the genre theory and in the notion of genre from different standpoints. Probably, the main readership of this edited volume would be formed by researchers already familiarised with the topic of genre. ESP novice researchers can also take advantage of the book but they may also need to complement their reading with the previous works of well-known authors on the notion of genre. This book combines outstanding authors on the topic with relevant contributions to the field of genre analysis. Another asset of the whole paperback is that readers can choose a complete reading or just a selection of the chapters. Their generic connection does not make them dependent on each other, just the opposite: independent chapters are useful and relevant by themselves. The emergence of new genres, the multimodal approach required in many current genres, and the evolution of genres and language, are some reasons for welcoming this contribution.

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